

CHAPTER 11
SECTION 3.3

ACCREDITATION

ISSUE DATE: September 20, 1990

AUTHORITY: [32 CFR 199.6\(c\)](#)

I. ISSUE

What does the [32 CFR 199.6](#) mean when it requires that a provider graduate from a regionally accredited university?

II. DESCRIPTION

A. Accreditation versus State Approval. Accreditation involves groups of recognized educational, institutional, and professional practitioners encouraging and assisting individual institutions or programs in the evaluation and improvement of their educational endeavors and publicly identifying those institutions or specialized units which meet or exceed commonly accepted standards of educational quality. The accreditation process is separate and distinct from the state approval process. State approval is an act of an officially authorized state government agency certifying that a unit or program within an institution complies with established minimum legal requirements.

B. Accrediting Body. An accrediting body is a voluntary, nongovernmental association that administers accrediting procedures for entire institutions or for specialized units. A recognized accrediting body is one formally acknowledged by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) as having met COPA's provisions and procedures for recognition.

III. POLICY

When the [32 CFR 199.6](#) specifies that a provider must graduate from a regionally accredited university or college, that means that the program has been evaluated by an accrediting body recognized by COPA. A booklet is available free of charge from COPA which contains the addresses and phone numbers of the six nationally recognized accrediting bodies. The booklet may be obtained by calling COPA at (202) 452-1433 or by writing to COPA at the following address: One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 305, Washington, DC 20036. Approval by a state government agency is not acceptable in lieu of accreditation.

NOTE: The foreign degree, although often seen in the physician category, is uncommon in the mental health categories. When it exists, the individual's credentials are reviewed by the state board on a case-by-case basis to see if the degree is equivalent and if the coursework has been sufficient. Some boards require testing in the area of expertise, as well as requiring passage of an English exam. The responsibility is upon the applicant to establish his/her

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credentials. For questionable foreign graduate programs or where additional input is determined necessary, the applicant should be advised to contact an independent education credentialing agency for assessment. Consideration should be given to the process the state uses, the testing the applicant has undergone and whether the applicant has been afforded clinical membership in the appropriate professional association.

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